

Contributions

YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE KINGDOM OF GOD—WHAT IS IT?—Mark 12:1-9

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The parable which presents itself to us here is only one of the many which our Savior used to illustrate his meanings. The simple in form yet plainly and powerfully illustrates the condition of the children of Israel. They were his by choice, perhaps because they were the nearer to the true form of worship than any other nation at that time. When we consider the application of this parable to the Israelites we see them as occupying a period of about 4000 years. This period of time might be divided into three consecutive periods, namely the (1) Patriarchal age, (2) The Prophetic age, (3) The time of their rejection.

During the history of the Jews there were no great periods in length of time that they actually and truly worshipped God as their only God. But were continually rebelling against him, not willing to be thus led and guided.

When Jesus spoke this "parable" it at once had its desired effect, so effectually did it penetrate the hearts of the Pharisees that they could no longer endure it and sought to lay hold on him. Truth always is able to withstand error, not unfrequently do we see "error," rise with indignation, with "madness," with "envy" to withstand truth. But truth always will conquer. Surrounded with all that was needed, fed with "manna" from heaven, nurtured and cared for by a Father's love, led out of bondage by his hand, to the "Land of Canaan," which "flowed with milk and honey," yet with all this they were not satisfied. Truly they were placed in a "vineyard" surrounded by the wall of God's protection against their enemies. Nation after nation was repulsed and scattered, though victory after victory was now for them, yet they would turn and with hatred put away their leader. The parental love for his children could not be extinguished, though persecution and death be inflicted. Instead of fruits of obedience being rendered to their Master, he received scorn and persecution. Not willing that any should be lost, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth, he sends other servants, but bruised and bleeding they are sent away. But alas! the trying hour had come, kind words have no effect, deliverance from bondage, saved in battle, saved in famine, saved from the hands of enemies, but all in vain.

Nothing but the separation of the Father and Son can bring them nearer, yet not separate. "He that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone," separation in person only, the shedding of his blood only could save thine from an untimely grave.

O, what love, what love, what redeeming love, "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God." It seems to me that we can hear the songs of the angels in heaven when a way was procured for the salvation of world. Think of the trial it would be for an earthly parent to give his son, perhaps his only son, in order that some one might be saved; our love is earthly, usually for selfish motives, we love those that love us, honor those that honor us, the sacrifice of God was divine, not for friends, but enemies. Martyrs have given their lives for God, but none were ever given for the world, yea, to redeem you and me,

But are we not also the recipients of this vineyard? Has not Jesus given us a portion of soil to cultivate? When he said, "What shall the Lord of the vineyard do?" "He will come and destroy the husbandmen and give the vineyard unto others." Did we not become the responsible parties? "When Jesus commanded the apostles to go and make disciples of all nations, and he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," did we not become responsible? When Jesus commissioned Paul to be a teacher to the Gentiles did we not become husbandmen to this vineyard? When Jesus through Paul commands all men everywhere to repent and turn to God, are we not responsible? Surely we are. When we consider the opportunities and advantages of today under which we are living, are we not expected to render more, and better fruits to our Master? Never in the history of nations has there been a greater demand for the "gospel." Never has there been a time when the world has had need of so many men and women who have the love of God in their heart to work in the "Lord's vineyard" as now.

True, noble, sincere, and honest men are what is needed, those who will stand on the platform of truth and principle, who are not only willing to sacrifice father and mother, brothers and sisters, homes and lands, but if needs be their lives, their all for the salvation of souls. When we were on the verge of falling, when we were on the precipice ready to take the fatal leap, Jesus Christ rescued us. When we were without God and without hope in the world, God in due time sent his Son and by his blood redeemed us from sin. But what fruits are we rendering to the servants of the Lord of the vineyard. We may not be openly beating these servants, we may not be putting them to death, but perhaps we are beating and bruising them with the tongue, and sending them empty handed away.

Jesus said through the apostle Paul, "For to be carnally minded is death, but

to be spiritually minded is life and peace." To be spiritually minded is to be opposite to the carnal mind. The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be. We often hear it said of one or another individual, he is a very spiritual man.

To be a servant in this vineyard is more than to live a moral life. We indeed may be honest in our daily transactions, blameless in every earthly relation, without being truly spiritual. Besides our earthly and human relation in which we stand, we sustain relations heavenly and divine.

God and immortality has a claim on us. We owe special duties to God, prayer, meditation, self surrender; a life wholly devoted to the direction of others from earth to glory. No are we doing our only duty when we direct the sinner to a higher plane of morality. Nor are we doing our whole duty when we succeed in getting him in the borders of the kingdom. Not until we seek every means to unfold to him the fullness of the blessed kingdom of Christ.

Nature portrays to us in many ways the infinite wisdom of God. These must be unfolded to the carnal mind. Between the face of the stranger to the kingdom of God is a barrier which must be removed. His carnal mind must be transformed; he must look upon Jesus no longer as a mere man. The mirror of God's eternal love must be held up before him, Jesus said, "Go work in my vineyard and whatever is right I will pay you." For over eighteen hundred years this has been sounded from pulpit to pulpit, from state to state and from continent to continent. Not an ocean whose waters have not been traversed by his ministers. Not a land whose soil has not been trodden by some missionary. All these like the "cable" which spans the mighty deep and carries messages from shore to shore are carrying the messages of God to foreign lands. May Christendom unite forces, and through the power of the "gospel" disperse the enemies of Satan, extend the borders of Zion, and unfold the truth to those who are yet strangers to the promise.

THE GATES OF THE BIBLE

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The word means something movable, used for closing an entrance. It also implies a way. It is found in the Bible many times. It is connected with some very beautiful things. When Jacob went out from Beersheba toward Haran at a certain place he tarried all night, using a stone for his pillow. He fell asleep and dreamed there was a ladder set upon the earth, the top of which reached to heaven, and that the angels